(b) if so, the steps taken to provide jobs to the unemployed labourers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) and (b) No, Sir. It is not a fact that thousands of workers have been rendered jobless due to closure of Dugda-I Plant of Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL). Only 320 persons affected as a result of closure of the plant have been re-assigned alternative job in Dugda-II plant of BCCL itself at present.

[English]

Funds for Handloom Weavers

9. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government have sanctioned funds to Andhra Pradesh Government for providing relief to cyclone affected handloom weavers;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the funds released so far out of it; and

(c) by what time the remaining Central assistance would be released for further aid to the weavers?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) to (c) Details of Release of Funds to the Andhra Pradesh Government for providing Refief to Cyclone affected Handloom Weavers under Various Schemes is as under :

(Figures in lakhs of Rs.)

S.No.	Name of the Scheme	Funds Sanctioned	Funds Released (out of 3)	Remarks/release of Remaining Funds
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(3-4)
1.	Workshed-cum Housing Scheme	333.92	333.92	--
2.	Market Development Assistance Scheme	300.00	300.00	--
3.	Handloom Dve. Centres and Quality Dyeing Units Scheme	177.12	177.12	--
4.	Project Package Scheme	392.87	196.80	196.07*
5.	Integrated Handloom Village Development Scheme	463.00	228.50	234.50*

* The remaining funds would be released to the State Government of Andhra Pradesh after release of Central and State share by the State Government, receipt of utilisation certificate and physical progress report

Subsidy on Sericulture

10. DR. PRABIN CHANDRA SARMA : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Assam has requested for increase in the subsidy on sericulture;

(b) if so, the action taken thereon; and

(c) the measures taken to boost the production of silk in Assam?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) In order to supplement the efforts of the State Government, the Central Silk Board (CSB) has established a network of its units for extending the necessary research, extension, infrastructural and training support for development of sericulture in the State. Besides, Assam is one of the 12 non-traditional pilot States covered under the World Bank/SDC assisted National Sericulture Project. Assistance has also been provided for implementation of an action plan for development of silk industry in North-Eastern States including Assam. In additions, the State can also avail of assistance under the on-going approved schemes of CSB.

Value of Rupee

11. SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that Indian rupees is weakening by an average 2 per cent per month; and

(b) if so, the steps the Government propose to take to arrest such a downwards trend ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) During the current financial year upto January 1997, the Indian rupee depreciated, on an average, by about 0.41 per cent per month against the US Dollar and by about 1.22 per cent against the pound Sterling. On the other hand, the rupee appreciated against the Japanese Yen, the Deutsche Mark and the Franch Franc by about 0.66 per cent, 0.37 per cent and 0.26 per cent per month, respectively during the same period.

(b) The exchange rate of the rupee is market determined. The foreign exchange market is monitored closely by the RBI and steps are taken, as and when necessary, to counter speculative pressures against the rupee and to maintain orderly foreign exchange market condition. The Foreign exchange market has behaved in an orderly fashion in 1996-97 so far.

Letters Received From M.Ps

12. SHRI RAMSAGAR. Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 507 dated November 22, 1996 regarding "replies to letters of Members of Parliament" and state:

(a) whether the information asked for has since been collected;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of further letters received from Members of Parliament on the affairs of banks from November 22, 1996 till date; and

(d) how many out of them are pending for replies?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) and (b). Yes Sir. As per available information the number of letters received from Hon'ble Members of Parliament during the period from January 1,1996 to November 22, 1996 ar as follows:

	No. of letters received	No. of letters disposed off	No. of letters pending
Government of India	1728	1237	491
Reserve Bank of India	39	32	7

(c) and (d) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Import of Raw Rubber

13. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : Will the MInister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated domestic production and demand of raw rubber in the country during 1997;

(b) whether there is any proposal to import raw rubber during 1997; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH). (a) The estimated domestic production and demand of raw rubber in the country during 1997-98 are 5,85,000 MTs and 6,19,000 MTs respectively.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Frauds in Banks

14. SHRI MANGAL RAM PREMI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of instances that have come to the notice of the Government where the officers in the private and public sector banks have cleared/ passed the cheques containing bogus signatures and also have issued the cheque books on forged/ fake documents and have contravened the laid down banking norms during the last six months; and

(b) the action taken against the officers involved in such transactions bank-wise ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) and (b) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) have reported that the present system of data collection in RBI does not generate information in the manner asked for in the Question. However, RBI recently collected information from Vysya Bank Ltd. regarding cheques with bogus signatures cleared/passed for payment and cheque books issued on forget/fake documents at their Delhi branches. It was reported that during the period from 1.6.1994 to 16.1.1996, five cheque books were issued on the basis of xeroxed copy/fake requisition slips. 23 cheques with bogus signatures were passed for payment/transfer during the period from 2.6.1994 to 14.6.1996. Three officers were awarded punishment of withholding one increment. Show cause notices have been issued by the bank to other concerned officials.

Financial Institutions

15. SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are awere of the problems being faced by the financial institutions in the country;

(b) whether the financial institutions have requested the Government to allow them to collect deposits like the